

Top Brits enter final Grand Prix of the season

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Darius Knight

Top players from all over Britain are part of an entry of 133 for the Tees Sport Barnsley Grand Prix, the last major English Table Tennis Grand Prix Circuit tournament of the season, being held at the Metrodome Leisure Complex, Barnsley, next weekend (23/24 July).

Twenty-one year-old England senior no.3 and 3 times national under 21 champion, Darius Knight (Surrey), a speedy left-handed attacker, is the top seed in the open men's singles, followed by two-wing looper and 7 times Welsh champion, 32 year old Ryan Jenkins. Seeded third is the tall, greatly improved England no.5, Chris Doran (Northamptonshire), a long range counter-hitter. The fourth seed is the Scottish no.1, Gavin Rumgay, renowned for his evil serves and all-round attacking play.

Damien Nicholls (Shropshire), a controlled attacking player, is seeded 5th, and the talented Paul McCreery, from Crossgar, Northern Ireland is already the Irish senior champion at only 19, is the 6th seed.

Michael Marsden, formerly of Durham but now living in Wales, and Richard Andrews (Berkshire), both exciting serve and loop attackers, the 7th and 8th seeds. Such is the strength of the draw that Scottish international Niall Cameron and Welsh international Stephen Jenkins, brother of Ryan, are unseeded.

In the women's singles, England rated no.4, Egle Adomelyte (Middlesex), whose tactical awareness, excellent positional play and keen fighting spirit makes her a very difficult opponent, is seeded no.1, with Lauren Spink (Norfolk), an all-round attacking former junior star who following university has made a successful return to top level competition, the second seed. Of players eligible to play for England, Lauren is ranked no.4.

Fifteen year-old speedy counter-hitting prodigy, Charlotte Carey, the Welsh no.1 junior and cadet, and no.2 senior, is the third seed, while the powerful Welsh no.2 junior and no.3 senior, Angharad Phillips, is seeded 4. Other women in strong contention are the bustling, Cleveland left-handed junior Jessica Dawson, another powerful Welsh junior Chloe Thomas, Megan Phillips (sister of Angharad) also a Welsh senior and junior international who plays with a combination bat, and Kent junior Jasmin Ould who has very dangerous forehand loop.

Several of the top seeded senior players are also the top seeds in the under-21 singles, with Darius Knight, Damien Nicholls and Paul McCreery being the top 3 in the men's under-21s, followed by paralympian Kim Daybell from Sheffield. In the women's, Welsh pair Charlotte Carey and Angharad Phillips are the top seeds, but they will have to fight it out with Jessica Dawson, Megan Phillips, Jasmine Ould and Chloe Thomas for the title.

Other events being held are (mixed) veterans (over 40) singles, 6 men's banded (excludes players having rankings/points above a certain level) singles, 3 women's banded singles, and 1 restricted (to players eligible for banded singles who are not under-21s or veterans) singles.

The banded events are being held on the Saturday, with all other events being held on the Sunday.

In addition to prize money for specific events, there will also be a prize fund of £13,300 available to players who, having played in at least 50% of Grand Prix events over the season, are in leading positions in the Grand Prix Circuit points table. Of entries in the Barnsley GP, the following were in contention for points prize money before next weekend:



Damien Nicholls

Men's singles: Gavin Rumgay, Chris Doran, Damien Nicholls, Richard Andrews, Tomasz Rzeszotko (Cheshire).

Women's singles: Lauren Spink, Egle Adomelyte, Jasmine Ould, Emily Standing (Cumberland), Emily Ross (Lincolnshire).

Men's under 21 singles: Damien Nicholls.

Women's under 21 singles: Jasmine Ould, Emily Standing, Emily Ross.

Men's band 1 singles: Tomasz Rzeszutko, Chris Lewis (Surrey).

Men's band 2 singles: Chris Lewis.

Men's band 3 singles: Natham Thomas (Wales).

Men's band 5 singles: Gary Keenan (Lancashire), Helmuth Osborne (Nottinghamshire)

Women's band 1 singles: Jasmin Ould.

Women's band 2 singles: Jasmin Ould.

Women's band 3 singles: Emily Standing.

Veteran singles: Tomasz Rzeszutko.

Restricted singles: Matt Porter (Sussex).

However, ETTA Events Officer Matt Porter points out that the prize money standings are decided down to the last event with new people qualifying at Barnsley, and although some of the events have already been decided a lot can change on the last weekend of play.

In the main event, the Open Men's Singles, the 2nd seed Ryan Jenkins will come into the reckoning and has a 67 point lead at the top of the table over 4th seed Gavin Rumgay which means Ryan needs just one more round to secure the overall title. Mike Marsden (Durham/Wales) and Niall Cameron (Scotland) will also be hoping to get themselves into the prize money position.

The Open Women's Singles placings can only be changed by the young Welsh player Charlotte Carey, who can take the 3rd place.

The men's band 1 could all change with 5 further players competing who can qualify for prize money. Heading up the international field is Neil Charles (Middlesex) who won the last band 1 event at Guildford, together with the recently returned-to table tennis Welshman Ryan Owen, Scottish player Richard Main and another Welshman Dean Cundy. However Jerome Jonah (Surrey) could still sneak into the top six.

Charlotte Carey is the only player not currently qualified for prize money who by playing could still qualify and win the women's band 1 overall title. Another name to watch is Emily Standing who, with some good results, could push her way into the final prize money place.

The men's band 2 has been already wrapped up by Swede Owe Karlsson, with Dan O'Connell from Wales in second place. However, Chris Lewis currently in 4th place is top seed for Barnsley and could pinch third place from Ryan Flood of Ireland, and 2nd seed at Barnsley, Jerome Jonah, could push Ryan Flood out of the prize money.

Of the five players qualified only Jas Ould is playing the last band 2 women's event, but even if she wins she can only finish 4th overall.

Connor Edwards (Wales) could be a rich man if results go his way. By playing at Barnsley he becomes eligible for prize money in bands 5, 4, and 3. The only other player that can come into contention is Laurence Sweeny (Wales) in band 5.

The veteran singles has 3 players that can change the current standing order, Tony West (Suffolk), Brian Allison (Lincolnshire) and Gary Whyman (Cleveland). By virtue of playing in the restricted singles Chris Main (Scotland) and Zoltan Hosszu (Surrey) automatically take the 1st and 2nd spots respectively, and with only 19 points separating them the overall circuit title could go either way.

The Women's under-21's is again down to the young Welsh girl Charlotte Carey. By simply playing one match in the group she goes top of the standings and knocks Jasmine Ould down to second place.

Damien Nicholls has got the under-21 men's singles event sown up yet again, but with 2nd placed Emran Hussian and 3rd placed Lloyd Gregory not playing, Richard Main is given a strong opportunity to leap over them to secure the 2nd place. The battle for the last prize money place in this event is down to young William Ross

(Lincolnshire), who only needs 2 points to get into the money.

All the current standings can be found [here](#)

Ken Muhr

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